

The Council of Nicaea

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ice. The story is obviously a fiction and part the campaign of calumny against Eusebius of Caesarea. He and his two friends signed the edict—not fraudulently or with mental reservations the story suggests—but for precisely the same reason that Eusebius of Caesarea had signed it. It was the Emperor's wish and they were willing to accept the decision of the Council, but they still stood out against signing the anathema. Two of them, Eusebius and Theognis, were deprived of their sees and sent into exile. Whether their gradation and exile were due wholly to this reason *it* is doubtful, though as an interesting parallel may be pointed out that Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, and Dionysius, Bishop of Milan, were led by the Emperor Valens in 355 because they refused to subscribe the condemnation of Arius at the Third Council of Milan. Arius and his two most faithful supporters were excommunicated and banished and their writings, notably

Thalia, were burnt with ignominy. The labours of the Council were not yet concluded. The bishops decided that Easter should be observed simultaneously throughout the Church and that the heathen time should give way to the Christian. They then drew up what are known as the Canons of Nicaea. We may indicate some of the more important, as, for example, the fifth, which provided that

questions of excommunication should be discussed in provincial councils to be held twice a year;

fourth, that there should be no less than three bishops present at the consecration of every bishop.